

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 HA-05 SNM-05 DEAE-00 MCT-02 /091 W
-----064937 271454Z /53

R 261430Z JUL 78
FM USMISSION USBERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7355
AMEMBASSY BONN
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUESSELDORF
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AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, AKB, WB
SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH BERLIN'S NEW SENATOR
FOR JUSTICE

SUMMARY: IN HIS FEW PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO DATE, BERLIN'S
NEW SENATOR FOR JUSTICE, GERHARD MEYER, HAS EXHIBITED A
MODESTY AND RECOGNITION OF PRACTICAL NECESSITIES UNKNOWN
IN HIS PREDECESSOR, FORMER SENATOR BAUMANN. MEYER HAS
INDICATED THAT HE SUPPORTS MANY OF BAUMANN'S PRISON REFORM
PROGRAMS AND BAUMANN'S COMMITMENT TO PERSONAL LIBERTY;
HOWEVER, HE HAS ALSO INDICATED AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEED
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FOR BERLIN PRISONS TO ENJOY EFFECTIVE SECURITY MEASURES
AND HE IS COMMITTED TO A BALANCING OF THE TWO IN A
PRACTICAL MANNER. END SUMMARY.

1. IN AN INTERVIEW IN THE BERLIN DAILY TAGESSPIEGEL,
BERLIN'S NEW SANATOR FOR JUSTICE, GERHARD MAYER, HAS
OUTLINED HIS PLANS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF BERLIN'S

PRISONS. MEYER STATED THAT HE CONSIDERS IT IMPORTANT NOT ONLY THAT REFORMS ARE CARRIED OUT, BUT ALSO HOW THEY ARE CARRIED OUT. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE STATED THAT HE AGREED WITH THE CONTENT OF MANY OF THE REFORMS THAT FORMER JUSTICE SENATOR BAUMANN HAD IMPLEMENTED, BUT THOUGHT THAT HIS OWN METHODS WOULD BE DIFFERENT.

2. IN GENERAL, MEYER SAID THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE THE VARIOUS POLICIES THAT HAVE BEEN BEGUN BY SENATOR BAUMANN SINCE THERE WAS INSUFFICIENT TIME TO ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH NEW POLICIES IN THE SHORT LEGISLATIVE PERIOD THAT REMAINS BEFORE THE GENERAL ELECTION IN MARCH 1979. ON SECURITY MATTERS, MEYER SAID THAT IF IT WERE NECESSARY TO REACH A DECISION WHETHER TO IMPLEMENT CERTAIN SECURITY MEASURES IN THE PRISONS, HE WOULD BE IN FAVOR OF IMPLEMENTATION IF THAT IMPLEMENTATION DID NOT UNDULY LIMIT THE RESOCIALIZATION EFFORTS OF THE PRISON AUTHORITIES. MEYER ALSO STATED A PREFERENCE FOR TECHNICAL CONSTRUCTION AND PERSONNEL SECURITY MEASURES, INSTEAD OF MEASURES DIRECTED AGAINST INDIVIDUAL PRISONERS WHICH WOULD INTERRUPT THEIR REHABILITATION PROCESS.

3. HE WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT HIS PROPOSAL TO INSTALL GLASS PARTITIONS IN THE PRISON VISITORS' ROOMS. IN HIS VIEW THIS WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO TREAT PRISONERS AND VISITORS LESS SEVERELY WHILE MAINTAINING SECURITY. HE DID SAY THAT ALL ATTORNEYS VISITING THEIR CLIENTS WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTINUE TO BE SEARCHED FOR THE TIME BEING.

4. ASKED ABOUT THE DRUG PROBLEMS IN BERLIN JAILS, MEYER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A GREAT DEAL STILL NEEDED TO BE DONE TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. HE ADMITTED THAT HE HAD NO CLEAR SOLUTION IN MIND, BUT THAT HE WAS CONSIDERING THE TRAINING OF SPECIAL OFFICERS FOR THE TASK.

5. COMMENT: THE SUBJECT OF PRISONS DOMINATED THIS INTERVIEW BECAUSE FAILURE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SECURITY IN BERLIN'S PRISONS WAS THE CAUSE OF THE DOWNFALL OF FORMER SENATOR BAUMANN, MEYER'S PREDECESSOR. (FORMER SENATOR EXFORT, BAUMANN'S PREDECESSOR, ALSO RESIGNED BECAUSE OF A PRISON BREAKOUT BY TERRORISTS.) MEYER'S REMARKS REFLECT AN OBVIOUS RECOGNITION ON HIS PART THAT SENATOR BAUMANN WAS OFTEN INSENSITIVE TO PUBLIC OPINION (OR THAT OF HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE BERLIN GOVERNMENT) WHEN A BAUMANN PROGRAM OR PRINCIPLE WAS AT ISSUE. IN PARTICULAR, AS A PROFESSOR OF LAW, BAUMANN HAD DEVELOPED STRONG PERSONAL VIEWS ON GERMAN PRISON REFORM. AS SENATOR FOR JUSTICE, BAUMANN COMMITTED HIMSELF TO IMPLEMENTING HIS VIEWS AND OFTEN RESISTED SUGGESTIONS TO

REVERSE OR REVISE A REFORM IF SUCH ACTION WAS CALLED FOR
IN ORDER TO DEFEND AGAINST THE ACTIVITIES OF CONVICTED
OR ACCUSED TERRORISTS IN BERLIN JAILS. THUS, IN ADDITION
TO MAKING NEEDED PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SECURITY
IN BERLIN JAILS, MEYER MUST ALSI (AS HE HAS DONE IN THIS
INTERVIEW) ENGAGE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS CONFIDENCE BUILDING
TO OVERCOME BAUMANN'S SPECTER.GEORGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978USBERL01769
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780308-0427
Format: TEL
From: USBERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780716/aaaaanwq.tel
Line Count: 123
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 32e6576c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1874627
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTERVIEW WITH BERLIN'S NEW SENATOR FOR JUSTICE SUMMARY: IN HIS FEW PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO DATE, BER
TAGS: PGOV, WB, AKB, (MEYER, GERHARD)
To: STATE BONN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/32e6576c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014